

BATES NETS FOUR IN GREAT DISPLAY

By ARGUS

Wycombe Wanderers 4 Dulwich Hamlet 3

THE praises of Paul Bates rang round Loakes Park on Saturday and the Dulwich Hamlet defenders, tormented by one of the Wycombe captain's greatest-ever displays, were among the first to join in. A glittering first half hat-trick — executed in eight fantastic minutes — brought Hamlet to their knees and when Bates scored his fourth goal, at a crucial stage in the second half, the crowd rose to him.

Fastest man on the field, with or without the ball, possessor of a lethal shot and a superb technician who could leave opponents clogged in the mud with effortless body swerves — Bates looked the complete international.

Each of his goals were masterpieces and a better effort than the second — when he glided past three defenders to arrow the ball past goalkeeper Nash — has not been seen at Loakes Park this season.

IMPERIOUS WORLEY

But the day did not entirely belong to Bates. There were other Hamlet scourges. The imperious dribbling of Len Worley spread havoc and confusion throughout the Dulwich rearguard from beginning to end, while Michael Rockell, back on first team duty at outside-right, had a splendid first half, including a boot in two of the goals.

There was praise too for never-still Sheldon Bressington, a tremendously strong centre-forward who plugged away so gallantly that he drew much of the Hamlet fire away from Bates and other forwards.

If Gerald Free had been fit — he was handicapped by a pulled muscle for most of the game — Wycombe might never have been in serious trouble.

As it was, Hamlet — outplayed for long periods — kept plugging away methodically and were particularly dangerous in the last seven minutes when an equaliser looked ominously near.

Wycombe's defence deteriorated considerably in the second half. Goalkeeper Ken Brown had an uncertain game and might well have stopped any of the three goals which had beat him had he been on peak form. But there was no lack of confidence about quietly-effective centre-half Ken Crook.

BATES BARRAGE

A spectacular diving header from outside-left Terry Vail gave Hamlet a seventh minute lead but a vicious Atkins free kick, just over the bar, led to the Bates barrage which put Wycombe 3-1 in the lead between the 22nd and 30th minutes.

An astute Rockell down-the-wing pass to Worley provided the centre for the equaliser. Three minutes later Bates finished off another Rockell-Worley move by dribbling through the Hamlet defence to score with a tremendous volley. Bressington flicked the ball through for the hat-trick goal, poor Nash having no chance at all with any of the shots which beat him.

A fine shot by Skipper which skidded off Brown's hands onto a post and into the net seconds before half time gave Hamlet the incentive to press fiercely after the break. Wycombe's lead seemed depressingly fragile before Bates snapped up a half chance to score another dazzling goal, in the 73rd minute.

Hamlet's defenders were living in awe of Bates by this time. Even after Field had scored from a goalmouth scramble and Dulwich were concentrating on a grandstand finish, Bates captured the initiative with another fast sweep into the Hamlet penalty area. When he was tripped Rockell shot inches over the bar.